

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7222
INFO USDOE WASHDC
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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, BR
SUBJ: NUCLEAR ISSUE -- FOLLOW-UP ON ANGRA I SAFETY REVELATIONS

REF: BRASILIA 2066

1. SUMMARY: GOB REACTION TO PRESS REVELATIONS OF SAFETY
PROBLEMS AT THE ANGRA-I REACTOR SITE SHIFTED FROM ITS
INITIAL MILD TONE TO A HARDER LINE. THE INVESTIGATIONS ORDERED
BY THE MINISTER OF MINES AND ENERGY FOCUSED ON WHO HAD LEAKED
THE DOCUMENTS, RATHER THAN THEIR SUBSTANCE. AN ALLEGATION
THAT NUCLEAR PROGRAM ENGINEERS SAFETY STANDARDS WAS NOT RESOLVED.
NEW SAFETY ISSUES CONCERNING REACTOR FOUNDATIONS, THE NUCLEAR
TRAINING PROGRAM AND EXPOSURE OF THE REACTOR SITE TO TIDAL
FLOODING WERE RAISED. THE ULTIMATE GOB RESPONSE TO THE SAFETY
ISSUE HAS BEEN TO BURY THE ISSUE IN INEFFECTIVE CONGRESSIONAL
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INVESTIGATIONS AND TO INCREASE THE SIZE OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT AT
THE CONSTRUCTION SITE.

2. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, INITIAL REACTION TO THE 12-15 MARCH
SERIES IN THE ESTADO DE SAO PAULO CRITICIZING SAFETY STANDARDS
AT THE ANGRA I CONSTRUCTION SITE WAS MILD. IN THEIR FORMAL
RESPONSES, GOB OFFICIALS HAD PRAISED THE SERIES AND PROMISED

FOLLOW-UP ACTION TO REMEDY THE PROBLEMS THE SERIES HIGHLIGHTED.

3. IT SOON DEVELOPED, HOWEVER, THAT SINCE THE LEAKED CLASSIFIED BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS ON WHICH THE SERIES WAS BASED RELATED TO INVESTIGATION OF A FIRE WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE FIVE MONTHS PREVIOUSLY, BRAZILIAN NUCLEAR AUTHORITIES GENERALLY TENDED TO REGARD THE SAFETY ISSUE AS HAVING ALREADY BEEN DEALT WITH. MINISTER OF MINES AND ENERGY SHIGEAKI UEKI, FOR EXAMPLE, CITED THE REPLACEMENT OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER AT THE PROJECT IN DECEMBER 1977 AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE REMEDIAL ACTION HE HAD PROMISED IN RESPONSE TO THE ARTICLES, AND REFERRED QUESTIONERS TO THE UTILITY OPERATING THE ANGRA DOS REIS REACTORS, FURNAS CENTRAIS ELECTRICAS, AND LICENSING AGENCY, THE BRAZILIAN NATIONAL NUCLEAR ENERGY COMMISSION (CNEN) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION. THESE, IN TURN, ISSUED STATEMENTS ON 14 MARCH SAYING THAT ALL NECESSARY MEASURES HAD ALREADY BEEN TAKEN AND WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ENFORCED.

4. THE "FULL INVESTIGATION" WHICH UEKI HAD PROMISED TURNED OUT TO BE FOCUSED ON WHO HAD LEAKED THE DOCUMENTS, NOT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CHARGES. UEKI TOLD ESTADO DE SAO PAULO ON 14 MARCH THAT HE HAD ORDERED THE INTERNAL SECURITY DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND ENERGY TO UNDERTAKE AN ADMINISTRATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE LEAKING OF THE DOUCMENTS. MINISTER UEKI'S SUTDIOUSLY UNDERSTATED INITIAL REACTION TO THE ESTADO DE SAO PAULO SERIES ALSO BEGAN TO FRAY AROUND THE EDGES AS TIME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PASSED--HE FREELY ADMITTED TO THE ESTADO, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT NEITHER HE NO PRESIDENT GEISEL HAD BEEN PLEASED BY THE SERIES, AND WAS SUBSEQUENTLY QUOTED BY THE CORREIO BRASILIENSE ON 16 MARCH AS DESCRIBING THE SERIES AND FOLLOW-UP OPINION ARTICLES PRINTED BY THE ESTADO DE SAO PAULO AS MALICIOUS, ALARMIST, EMOTIONALIST, AND AS SAYING SOMEWHAT MISTERIOUSLY, THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS BEHIND THEM. ACCORDING TO THE CORREIO BRASILIENSE, WHOSE REPORTERS CAUGHT THE MINISTER AT THE OPENING OF A TRAFFIC SAFETY AND FUEL CONSERVATION CONFERENCE, UEKI WAS PARTICULARLY BITTER ABOUT AN ARTICLE BY SAO PAULO STATE UNIVERSITY PHYSICS DEPARTMENT HEAD (AND LEADING NUCLEAR PROGRAM CRITIC) JOSE GOLDEMBERG, WHICH CHARGED THAT THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM WOULD LEAD TO A HIROSHIMA-TYPE DISASTER. UEKI COMMENTED THAT HE WHO DOES NOT KNOW WHAT SIDE HE IS ON NEVER FINDS FAVORABLE WINDS, AND WENT ON TO SSURE THE REPORTERS THE " THE GOVERNMENT KNOWS WHAT IT IS DOING. AT THE SAME TIME, FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOESMAN FILIPE LAMPREIA WAS TERMING FOREIGN CRITICISM OF THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM BASED ON THE ESTADO SERIES " MALEVOLENT AND

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CLEARLY MOTIVATED BY ANTI-BRAZILIAN INTENTIONS".

5. IT WAS AT LEAST PARTLY IN RESPONSE TO UEKI'S TENDENCY TO AVOID THE NUCLEAR SAFETY ISSUE (ALTHOUGH MORE SPECIFICALLY IS RESPONSE TO AN UNRELATED BUT CONCURRENT MINI-SCANDAL CONCERNING INSIDER TRADING IN PETROBRAS STOCK DURING A SERIES OF RUMORS -- ULTIMATELY DISPROVED -- CONCERNING POSSIBLE OFFSHORE OIL DISCOVERIES) THAT THE JORNAL DO BRASIL EDITORIALIZED ON 15 MARCH THAT "MINISTER UEKI HAS A SINGULAR PECULIARITY". HE INSISTS UPON CLARIFICATIONS FROM OTHERS - IN THIS CASE THE STOCK MARKET COMMISSION AND PETROBRAS - BUT HE HIMSELF DOES NOT MAKE A HABIT OF CLARIFYING MUCH OF ANYTHING."

6. THE ONLY ASPECT OF THE ESTADO DE SAO PAULO SERIES WHICH WAS NOT RELATED TO THE OCTOBER 1977 FIRE AT THE ANGRA I

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CONSTRUCTION SITE WAS THE CHARGE THAT IN EARLY MARCH 1978, SIX ENGINEERS AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE HAD BEEN SUBJECTED

TO PRESSURES FROM PAULO NOGUEIRA BATISTA, PRESIDENT OF THE BRAZILIAN PUBLIC-SECTOR NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, NUCLEBRAS, TO SIGN STATEMENTS CERTIFYING THAT THE HIGHEST SAFETY STANDARDS WERE BEING APPLIED AT THE ANGRA I SITE. WHEN THE ENGINEERS REFUSED TO SIGN, THEY WERE ALLEGEDLY SUBJECTED TO ADDITIONAL PRESSURES FROM POLICE AUTHORITIES. THIS CHARGE WAS MET WITH INCREASINGLY VIGOROUS DENIALS FROM ALL CONCERNED ON THE SIDE OF BRAZILIAN OFFICIALDOM, AND OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL WEEKS, THE ESTADO FOUND ITSELF UNDERCUT ON THIS STORY EVEN BY ITS SOURCE, A LAWYER ACTIVE IN HUMAN RIGHTS CASES, WHO DENIED IN WRITING THAT HE KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT THE ALLEGED PRESSURES OR HAD EVEN SPOKEN TO ESTADO CORRESPONDENTS ABOUT THE SUBJECT. THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE IS AT A STANDOFF, WITH THE ESTADO'S CONFIDENCE IN ITS REPORTERS ABOUT EVENLY BALANCED BY THE VEHEMENCE OF OFFICIAL DENIALS. (COMMENT: INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY ON THIS POINT IS ALSO INCONCLUSIVE. ON THE ONE HAND, THE ESTADO'S VERSION IS SUPPORTED BY A HIGHLY CONDITIONAL DENIAL OF ANY "OFFICIAL" KNOWLEDGE OF THE MATTER BY NOGUEIRA BATISTA'S STAFF CHIEF, GENERAL AFONSO EMILIO SARMENTO, WHO WOULD NOT REPLY TO QUESTIONS ABOUT POSSIBLE "UNOFFICIAL" KNOWLEDGE; BY COMMENTS OF A SENIOR CNEN OFFICIAL TO CONSULATE GENERAL RIO DE JANEIRO OFFICERS, IN WHICH THE OFFICIAL SAID THAT WHILE HE COULD NOT CONFIRM OR DENY THE STORY AS A WHOLE, CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF IT WERE, TO HIS KNOWLEDGE, ACCURATE; AND BY A DEMONSTRATED PENCHANT OF NUCLEAR PROGRAM OFFICIALS TO ATTEMPT TO PROVE THEIR POINTS BY COLLECTING SIGNED STATEMENTS SUPPORTING THEM. ON THE OTHER HAND, HOWEVER, THERE IS A CERTAIN ILLOGIC TO THE ESTADO'S CLAIM THAT IT WAS REFRAINING FROM PUBLISHING THE NAMES OF THE SIX ENGINEERS WHO HAD BEEN SUBJECTED TO PRESSURES IN ORDER TO PROTECT THEM FROM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RETALIATION FROM NUCLEAR PROGRAM OFFICIALS, SINCE THE OFFICIALS COULD BE EXPECTED TO REMEMBER WHO THEY HAD PRESSURED, AND ANY RETRIBUTION TO BE EXTRACTED FROM THE ENGINEERS BECAUSE OF PUBLICATION OF THE STORY WOULD PRESUMABLY NOT BE LESSENED BY FAILURE TO CITE THEIR NAMES. END COMMENT).

7. THE ESTADO MAINTAINED THE PRESSURE WITH FEATURES ON 23 MARCH ON PROBLEMS WITH THE FOUNDATIONS OF ANGRA I AND ANGRA II AND ON 2 APRIL ON ALLEGED DEFICIENCIES IN THE FURNAS/CNEN SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROGRAM. THESE WERE TREATED LESS SENSATIONALLY THAN THE RESULTS OF THE FIRE INVESTIGATION, EVEN THOUGH THE PROBLEMS WERE MORE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE ULTIMATE OPERATING SAFETY OF THE COMPLEX THAN WAS THE FIRE. THE PROBLEM WITH THE FOUNDATIONS RELATES TO HIGH GROUND WATER LEVELS AND SLOPING BEDROCK FORMATIONS AT THE ANGRA DOS REIS SITE. ANGRA II PROVED TO REQUIRE MORE FOUNDATION WORK IN THE FORM OF CONCRETE PILINGS REACHING TO BEDROCK

THAN HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED, AND IN THE COURSE OF RELATED EXCAVATIONS, THE HIGH GROUND WATER LEVEL REQUIRED SUBSTANTIAL PUMPING OUT OF WATER. THIS IN TURN LOWERED THE GROUND WATER LEVEL THROUGHOUT THE SITE, PARTICULARLY UNDR THE NEARBY TURBOGENERATOR BUILDING OF THE ANGRA I COMPLEX, RESULTING IN SUBSIDENCE OF THE BUILDING'S FOUNDATIONS. THE SUBSIDENCE WAS NOTED BEFORE THE BUILDING WAS DAMAGED AND WAS SUBSEQUENTLY STOPPED BY CONSTRUCTION OF A GROUND WATER BARRIER BETWEEN THE ANGRA I AND ANGRA II COMPLEXES. (COMMENT: THIS PROBLEM WAS APPARENTLY THE SOURCE OF SOME BAD FEELINGS BETWEEN

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AMERICAN ENGINEERS AT ANGRA I AND GERMAN ENGINEERS AT ANGRA II, BUT NOT TO THE EXTENT CLAIMED IN THE ORIGINAL ESTADO EXPOSE ARTICLES, END COMMENT).

8. THE ESTADO FEATURE ON SPECIALIZED TRAINING FOR THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM CONTRASTED THE OFFICIAL VIEW OF CNEN (PRESENTED IN AN INTERVIEW WITH REX NAZARE ALVES, CNEN'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR) WITH THOSE OF THREE PROMINENT CRITICS OF THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM: JOSE GOLDEMBERG; MARCELO DAMY DE SOUZA SANTOS, AN EX-PRESIDENT OF CNEN, FOUNDER OF THE INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS AT THE STATE

UNIVERSITY OF CMAPINAS (UNICAMP), AND PRESENTLY A PHYSICS PROFESSOR AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF SAO PAULO; AND ROGERIO CERQUEIRA LEITE, FACULTY COORDINATOR AT UNICAMP. ALVES CLAIMED THT THE CNEN TRAINING PROGRAM WAS CONSIDERED BY IAEA TO BE A MODEL FOR DEVELOPING NATIONS, ALTHOUGH HE RECOGNIZED THAT BECAUSE BRAZIL "LACKED CERTAIN INSTALLATIONS," MUCH OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE TRAINING WAS BEING CONDUCTED OVERSEAS AND/OR ON-THE-JOB IN BRAZIL. ALVES ALSO MADE THE POINT THAT CNEN CALCULATED THAT OF THE SPECIALIZED MANPOWER RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR THE BRAZILIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM (ESTIMATED AT ABOUT 10,000 FOR THE FULL PROGRAM, OF WHICH 5,500 ARE TECHNICIANS AND 4,500 UNIVERSITY GRADUATES), LESS THAN 17 PERCENT INVOLVED STRICTLY NUCLEAR SPECIALTIES, AND LESS THAN 3 PERCENT ACTUALLY REQUIRED THE SERVICES OF NUCLEAR PHYSICISTS. STATISTICS PROVIDED BY CNEN INDICATED THAT TO DATE, 214 BRAZILIANS HAD RECEIVED GOVERNMENT-FINANCED DOCTORAL DEGREES OUTSIDE BRAZIL IN SPECIALTIES RELATED TO THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM (OVER HALF WERE IN ENGINEERING); THERE ARE PRESENTLY 67 STUDENTS IN ON-THE-JOB TECHNICAL TRAINING COURSES OUTSIDE BRAZIL, AND 27 STUDENTS HAVE COMPLETED SUCH COURSES; BRAZILIAN AND GERMAN SPECIALISTS HAD GIVEN VARIOUS ON-THE-JOB CLASSROOM TECHNICAL TRAINING COURSES INSIDE BRAZIL TO 375 STUDENTS; AND BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITIES ARE CURRENTLY PROVIDING POST-GRADUATE TRAINING TO SOME 800 STUDENTS (OF WHOM 320 ARE IN A ONE-YEAR INTRODUCTORY NUCLEAR ENGINEERING PROGRAM, WITH THE REMAINDER IN TWO-YEAR MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAMS IN VARIOUS ENGINEERING FIELDS) UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE BRAZILIAN NUCLEAR TRAINING PROGRAM (PRONUCLEAR). THE CRITICS, PARTICULARLY GOLDEMBERG, LAUNCHED A FRONTAL ATTACK ON THE ON-THE-JOB TRAINING PROGRAM WHICH IS MOSTLY BEING CONDUCTED AT GERMAN NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS, WITH GOLDEMBERG POINTING OUT THAT WHILE THE PROGRAM MAY PROVIDE "KNOW-HOW", IT MOST CERTAINLY DOES NOT PROVIDE THE ELEMENT MOST NECESSARY FOR THE BRAZILIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM, "KNOW-WHY". CERQUEIRA LEITE AND GOLDEMBERG BOTH WERE CRITICAL OF THE LACK OF TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY AT THE POLICY LEVELS IN THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM, WITH GOLDEMBERG CALLING A STATEMENT OF NUCLEBRAS PRESIDENT NOGUEIRA BATISTA TO THE EFFECT THAT THERE WERE MORE THAN 40 PHYSICISTS ON THE NUCLEBRAS STAFF A "TYPICAL POLITICAL ARGUMENT" DESIGNED TO OBSCURE THE FACT THAT THEY WERE ALL AT OPERATING LEVELS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF THE PROGRAM, AND THAT NONE WERE ON NOGUEIRA BATISTA'S IMMEDIATE STAFF OR AT POLICY LEVELS IN NUCLEBRAS, WHERE CRITICAL POLICY CHOICES WERE BEING MADE WITHOUT BENEFIT OF TECHNICAL

KNOWLEDGE. DAMY, ON THE OTHER HAND, REPEATED A BY NOW STANDARD LINE OF CRITICISM FOCUSING ON THE TOTAL COMMITMENT OF THE BRAZILIAN PROGRAM TO GERMAN TECHNOLOGY, THE URANIUM FUEL CYCLE, AND IN PARTICULAR, THE UNPROVEN JET NOZZLE ENRICHMENT SYSTEM WITHOUT ANY PROVISION FOR OPTIONS IN THE EVENT OF DIFFICULTIES OR FAILURES IN THE TECHNOLOGICAL PACKAGE THEY HAD OPTED FOR. DAMY FELT THAT THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT POSSIBLE THAT THE JET NOZZLE SYSTEM WOULD PROVE UNWORKABLE, PLACING BRAZIL IN A SITUATION OF CONTINUED LONG-TERM DEPENDENCE ON EXTERNAL SUPPLIES OF ENRICHED FUEL AND FRUSTRATING THE BASIC OBJECTIVE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE.

9. THE GOB DID EVENTUALLY RESPOND TO THE ORIGINAL ESTADO ARTICLES AND RELATED CRITICISM ON THE POLITICAL LEVEL. ON 6 APRIL, THE MAJOR NEWSPAPERS REPORTED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BRAZILIAN CONGRESS CONCERNING THE ISSUE -- SENATOR VIRGILIO TAVORA, THE GOVERNING ARENA PARTY'S ASSISTANT LEADER IN THE SENATE, PRESENTED A LONG SPEECH DEFENDING THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON MINES AND ENERGY. TAVORA, WHO HAS OFTEN DEFENDED THE GOVERNMENT NUCLEAR PROGRAM IN THE CONGRESS,

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CLAIMED THAT THE CHOICES OF EXISTING PWR TECHNOLOGY OVER OTHER POSSIBILITIES SUCH AS THE CANDU OR DEVELOPMENT OF A DOMESTICALLY-DESIGNED SYSTEM WAS MOTIVATED BY A DESIRE ON THE PART OF THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT TO GET THE MOST FOR THE MONEY IT WAS INVESTING IN THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM. HE FELT THAT IN ACQUIRING THE PWR TECHNOLOGY, BRAZIL WAS INVESTING IN PROVEN TECHNOLOGY AND FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF NUMEROUS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, WHICH HAD ADOPTED PWR TECHNOLOGY RATHER THAN ATTEMPT THE LONG, EXPENSIVE, AND UNCERTAIN DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATE TECHNOLOGIES. TAVORA POINTED OUT THAT BRAZIL COULD NOT AFFORD THE LUXURY OF USING ITS NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM FOR EXPERIMENTAL PURPOSES. TAVORA DEFENDED THE SAFETY RECORD AT THE ANGRA SITES AS WITHIN NORMAL LIMITS. BUT THEN ADDED THAT STANDARDS SHOULD BE TIGHTENED BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT.

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QPM IN RESPONSE TO TAVORA'S SPEECH, PROPOSALS FOR BRAZILIAN CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS OF THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM IN GENERAL AND SAFETY STANDARDS AT THE ANGRA DOE REIS SITES IN PARTICULAR WERE INTRODUCED BY OPPOSITION MDB REPRESENTATIVES IN BOTH THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF MINES AND ENERGY AND THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. BOTH BODIES ACCEPTED THE OPPOSITION SUGGESTIONS. THE SENATE COMMITTEE WILL CONCENTRATE ON A LONGER-TERM EVALUATION OF THE OVERALL NUCLEAR PROGRAM, WHILE THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES INVESTIGATION WILL BE SHORTER IN LENGTH AND WILL CONCENTRATE ON SAFETY ISSUES CONNECTED WITH THE ANGRA DOS REIS REACTORS, WHICH THE COMMITTEE VISITED ON 13 APRIL. IN REPORTING THE VISIT, O GLOBO AND THE JORNAL DO BRASIL CONCENTRATED ON THREE DEVELOPMENTS IN THEIR 14 APRIL EDITIONS: THE REVELATION BY AN ENGINEER AT THE SITE THAT ON 8 APRIL, IT HAD BEEN NECESSARY TO INCREASE THE HEIGHT OF THE ROCK SEA WALL ALONG THE BEACH AT THE ANGRA I SITE ON AN EMERGENCY BASIS TO PREVENT FLOODING OF THE PROJECT BY UNUSUALLY HIGH TIDES AND SURF ON THAT DAY; THE PRESENTATION TO THE DEPUTIES BY FURNAS PRESIDENT LICINIO SEABRA OF COPIES OF LETTERS TO HIM FROM BOTH WESTINGHOUSE AND KWU (DATED 7 AND 4 APRIL, RESPECTIVELY) ATTESTING TO THE APPLICATION OF THE HIGHEST SAFETY STANDARDS AT THE ANGRA I AND ANGRA II SITES; AND THE STATEMENT BY NUCLEBRAS DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CARLOS SYLLUS THAT THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND GREAT BRITAIN THAT ENRICHED FUEL WOULD BE SUPPLIED TO THE BRAZILIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM REGARDLESS OF THE POSITION TAKEN BY THE DUTCH, AND THAT IN THE EVENT OF UNANTICIPATED DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING SUPPLIES, THE GOVERNMENTS OF BOTH FRANCE AND THE SOVIET UNION HAD ALREADY EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN SUPPLYING ENRICHED FUEL TO BRAZIL. THE NEWSPAPERS LET THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE LETTERS WHICH FURNAS RECEIVED FROM THE TWO PRIME CONTRACORS

CERTIFYING SAFETY STANDARDS AND THE LETTERS WHICH HAD ALLEGEDLY
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BEEN DEMANDED OF THE UNNAMED SIX ENGINEERS PASS WITHOUT COMMENT;
AND A FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN DECLINED TO COMMENT ON SYLLUS'
STATEMENT THAT FRANCE AND THE SOVIET UNION HAD OFFERED TO SUPPLY
ENRICHED FUEL TO BRAZIL.

1. THE ESTADO DE SAO PAULO, HOWEVER, WAS VICIOUS IN ITS
CRITICISMS OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN
ITS 14 APRIL EDITION. THE GROUP VISITING THE SITE CONSISTED
OF THREE MDB DEPUTIES AND TWO ARENA DEPUTIES, LED BY THE
CHAIRMAN OF THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE, MDB DEPUTY
LUIZ COUTO. ACCORDING TO THE ESTADO, THE DEPUTIES WERE
UPREPARED AND APPARENTLY UNINTERESTED IN INVESTIGATING THE
SAFETY PROBLEMS AT THE SITE OF BRAZIL'S FIRST NUCLEAR PLANT.
WHILE AT THE ANGRA SITE THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS APPOINTED PEDRO
FARIA, AN MDB DEPUTY FROM RIO DE JANEIRO, TO HEAD A SUBCOMMITTEE
ON NUCLEAR ENERGY, AND FARIA PROMPTLY ANNOUNCED TO ALL PRESENT
THAT HE KNEW MUCH MORE ABOUT SAMBAS, SOCCER, AND CARNIVALS
THAN ABOUT NUCLEAR ENERGY. ESTADO REPORTED THAT THE DEPUTIES
LACK OF SERIOUSNESS GREATLY SURPRISED THE ASSEMBLED NUCLEAR
PROGRAM OFFICIALS (SEABRA, SYLLUS, AND CNEN PRESIDENT HERVASIO
DE CARVALHO), WHO, BEFORE THE SESSION DEGENERATED INTO
GENERAL HILARITY, ATTEMPTED TO MAKE A SERIOUS DEFENSE OF THE
PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTATION. AS AN EXAMPLE, OF THE DEPUTIES LACK
OF INTERESTN THE ESTADO CITED A REMARK BY HERVASIO DE CARVALHO
IN WHICH HE CONFIRMED THAT THE JET-NOZZLED ENRICHMENT SYSTEM
WAS AS YET UNPROVED ON AN INDUSTRIAL SCALE, AND ADDED THAT
IT IS A METHOD WHICH WHITH A LITTLE MORE DEVELOPMENT COULD BECOME
COMPETITIVE, AND MIGHT EVEN BECOME A WINNING HORSE. THE ESTADO
REMARKED THAT WITH THIS STATEMENT , HERVASIO DE CARVALHO
LET IT BE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE METHOD IS A MATTER
OF LUCK, BUT NOT EVEN THIS PROMPTED THE DEPUTIES TO INSIST
ON ADDITIONAL EXPLANATIONS OF THE MATTER."

12. IN THE COURSE OF THE VISIT TO THE ANGRA SITE BY THE CHAMBER
OF DEPUTIES MEMBERS, FURNAS ANNOUNCED WHAT HAS APPARENTLY
BEEN THE ONLY CONCRETE CHANGE IN THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM IN THE WAKE
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OF THE ESTADO DO SAO PAULO REVELATIONS: THE FIRE BRIGADE
MAINTAINED BY FURNAS AT THE ANGRA DOS REIS SITE HAS BEEN INCREASED
FROM 60 TO 80 MEMBERS, AND THE MEMBERS OF THE BRIGADE ARE NOW
REQUIRED TO PERFORM DAILY CALESTHENICS -- ON THEIR OWN TIME.
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